Music, Politics, and Violence

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There is a tendency to think of music as a harmonious force in the world, a notion that is scrutinized, challenged, and revised in this collection of nine essays bookended by the editors' introduction and an afterword by J. Martin Daughtry. We come away with a feel for "music's richness as a medium for understanding violence" (1, editors' introduction) and with "a more comprehensive understanding of the ways musical voices resonate through, interact with, and support violent acts" (258, Daughtry's afterword). The nine intervening essays offer a diverse collection of case studies, linked rather loosely by the theme of violence lurking in the vicinity or background of musical production. These essays are helpfully grouped into three parts: Objective and Subjective Violences; Violence and Reconciliation; and Musical Memorializations of Violent Pasts.

To keep this review in manageable proportion, I will offer brief comments on the scope of each of these sections, making mention of the essays in each and selecting one for additional commentary; I will close the review with a few words on Daughtry's intriguing afterword. The essays in Part 1 take us into several war zones—Nicholas Attfield's "'A Healing Draft for a Sick People': War in the Pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1914–1918," set in Germany of the First World War; Catherine Baker's "The Afterlife of Neda Ukraden: Negotiating Space and Memory through Popular Music after the Fall of Yugoslavia, 1990–2008," set in the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s and their aftermath; Christina Baade's "Between the Lines: 'Lili Marlene,' Sexuality, and the Desert War," set in the early stages of the Second World War; and James Deaville's "The Changing Sounds of War: Television News Music and Armed Con?icts from Vietnam to Iraq," set in the more recent conflicts of the so-called War on Terror. These essays deal with the proximity of music to the waging of war, either directly as an instrument of combat or indirectly as a cultural resource fanning the flames of war or sharpening social divisions magnified in the context of war.

In this first group of essays I highlight Catherine Baker's piece on the Yugoslavian popular singer Neda Ukraden, who, like many residents in the Balkan region, was connected to multiple ethnic-national constituencies in the pre-war period, a condition that could not withstand the violent fracturing of the former Yugoslavia into several separate nations. This singer, as we learn from Baker's account, evinced a highly ambiguous identity that served her well in the pre-war period but became a liability as the war forced people to strategically align with one or another faction in the conflict. Born to Serbian parents in Croatia, and living in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Neda Ukraden enjoyed a strong following in Croatia and audiences across the ethnic boundaries held together in Tito's Yugoslavia. In 1992, when the conflict spread to Bosnia, she relocated to Belgrade, which in the fever of war was interpreted to mean that she "became a Serb." As a result, her music was prohibited in wartime Croatia, where only recently, and tenuously, has Ukraden been able to reassert her presence. Baker's treatment of Neda Ukraden shows how artists in war settings must carefully attend to nuances of performance style as they construct an "ethnic biography"; in the case of Ukraden, this biography was "too ambiguous too early to be accommodated into an entertainment industry restructured along ethno-national lines" (76).

The second group of essays takes up the theme of music, violence, and reconciliation, and presents three case studies: David McDonald's "Revivals and New Arrivals: Protest Song in the Al-Aqsa Intifada"; Victor Vicente's "Pax Mevlana: Mevlevi Su? Music and the Reconciliation of Islam and the West"; and Kevin Miller's "Choreographing (against) Coup Culture: Reconciliation and Cross-Cultural Performance in the Fiji Islands." Each locates expressive culture at the center of efforts to establish viable social and political identities in complex and troubled settings. The take-away, for me at least, is that reconciliation is an admirable but difficult task in these settings, always vulnerable to the tides of factionalism and endemic violence. David McDonald's essay brings into focus the complexity of efforts to consolidate a Palestinian identity during the al-Aqsa intifada (2002-2006). Noting that "performative and expressive media are not epiphenomenal to larger social, political, and economic forces, but rather they are constitutive of those forces" (131), McDonald characterizes Palestinian protest song during this period as a "unique sphere for public debate" (146) where "fundamental issues of national identity were negotiated" (147). He shows how these songs, their creators, and their audiences struggled to navigate deep cultural divides between competing ideas about the role of religion in public life, between insider and outsider perspectives, and between reverence for the old and attraction to the new.

The third set of essays takes us into music as a vehicle of commemorative practice, and features two essays: Jonathan Ritter's "Complementary Discourses of Truth and Memory: The Peruvian Truth Commission and the Canción Social Ayacuchana"; and Amy Wlodarski's "National Identity after National Socialism: German Receptions of the

Holocaust Cantata, *Jüdische Chronik* (1960/1961)." These authors remind us that commemorations are often situated in conflictive arenas and that these settings influence what gets commemorated, how the commemoration is accomplished, and how commemorative actions are understood and interpreted. Jonathan Ritter argues that *canción social* (social song), or "testimonial song," in the Ayacucho region of Peru—a zone that was hit hard by violence tied to the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebellion and its quashing by the Peruvian military in the last two decades of the twentieth century—offered a means of "rupturing the silence" about the terrible depredations affecting this area. He juxtaposes the official venue of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the informal testimonial song movement, according to each a performative role, but noting the more persistent presence of protest song, which was on the scene before the commission came into being and continues to serve commemorative functions in the absence of palpable results from the commission's labors.

I will conclude with a few comments on J. Martin Daughtry's afterword, titled "From Voice to Violence and Back Again." Daughtry offers us an engaging meditation on voice, taking notice of three metaphors commonly invoked to establish the alleged capacity of voice to break the silence enforced by violence: voice as presence, voice as essence, and voice as agency. Daughtry counters such sanguine assumptions with a soberer vision, noting that "resonating voices in space don't just encounter a violent world – at times, they help construct it" (254). Still, at last, Daughtry concedes that voice and vocal music "can be effectively deployed in opposition to violence," and that is something worth striving for.

Co-editors Susan Fast and Kip Pegley tell us in their introduction that the essays in this book coalesce around the concept that "music is never neutral," that it is "an *active* agent rather than a passive art" (27). This premise is amply confirmed and illustrated in the diffuse and fascinating case studies they have assembled in *Music, Politics, and Violence*.